586 The new husband of a woman who has been deserted does not [186] and cannot maintain any relations whatever with the former husband. In any event, the latter would never agree to see his successor, even though the divorce had been arranged with his consent. Besides, the new marriage is often contracted in another village.

The Question of Nationality Among the Mossi

641 In Mossi country the child takes the father's nationality, and any child born of a Moaga subject is himself a Moaga.

593 Any child, male or female, is under the authority, first, of his father and, above him, of the head of the family. A mother may never, under any circumstances, give her daughter in marriage.

641 If a Moaga woman happens to marry a foreigner, she does not acquire her husband's nationality. In the same way, a foreign girl (a Bambara or a Djerma, for example) does not lose her own nationality when she marries a Moaga. In the eyes of her husband's relatives, as well as the rest of the populace, she remains a foreigner, required to practice the customs of her husband but nevertheless a foreigner.

Thus, when a Moaga subject chooses to emigrate, the nationality of his children who remain in Mossi territory, whether minor or of age, does not ipso facto change.

A legitimate child takes on his father's nationality [187] even though the foreign-born father may have a Moaga as his wife.

Children born of a Moaga father and either a Moaga or foreign-born mother are Mossi.

● [848] As for illegitimate children, they take the mother's nationality unless they are recognized, and this can be done only if the mother marries before the birth of the child.

If the child has not been legitimized until after his birth, he will sooner or later suffer from the omission, since his bastard origin will not long remain a secret.

Loss of nationality. The Mossi may lose their nationality only under the following two conditions.

1. When the Moaga subject has been expelled from his village for some serious crime, sent away by his relatives, and no longer regarded

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
584 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754]

1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
848 which she had by another man into her husband's home. /This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom," but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
626 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue.
684 If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

584 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife. —The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 586 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

● 848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 847 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 115 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.

Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier, 848 "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he
431 sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.